

our deciding what the priorities for the country are.

I remember a few months ago when colleagues in this House and Senate in the majority felt that the priority was a tax cut, a tax cut that was geared to the top 1 percent wealthiest individuals in the country, and they were able to pass a tax cut that took basically all of the on-budget surplus, almost \$800 billion, much more than we are talking about here.

We are talking about less than a tenth of that, few percentage points of that to help with Medicare so that people have health care that they need when they need it. So the priority was to do that. The President said no. He vetoed that.

We now have an opportunity to come back and do what I know the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) and I have been saying all along, which is put Social Security and Medicare first. The first step with Medicare is to restore the cuts. We have to do that so that we can then go on to strengthen it.

I often think about the fact that, in my mind, Social Security and Medicare are great American success stories. Prior to Social Security, half of the American seniors were in poverty. Today, it is less than 11 percent. Prior to Medicare being enacted in 1965, half the seniors could not purchase insurance, could not get health insurance.

Today one of the great things about our country is that, if one is 65 years of age, one knows, or if one is disabled, one knows that one is able to have basic health care provided to one in this country. This is something we should be proud of. I do not understand why it is now, when we are faced with the opportunity to decide what our American priorities are for the next 10 years, why we are fighting with the majority to restore what everyone agrees were cuts that went too far.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I just want to echo what the gentlewoman from Michigan has just said. When I go around to my district, what people are talking about is, not tax cuts for the wealthy, but they are talking about good quality health care for all. They are talking about expanding Medicare, which I have yet to find anybody who thinks that Medicare is a bad idea. Everybody in my district thinks it is a great idea. It is one of the most successful social programs in the history of this country. They want to expand Medicare to provide a prescription drug benefit. They would rather have a prescription drug benefit than see Donald Trump get a tax cut.

Those are the choices we are faced with right now. We have a surplus, as the gentlewoman pointed out. The resources are there. Are we going to take that surplus, invest it in Social Security, invest it in Medicare, make sure that hospitals have the funding that they need, make sure that we have enough nurses and doctors, make sure that our home health care agencies can

stay strong, make sure that there is a prescription drug benefit for all Medicare eligible senior citizens? Are we going to do that, or are we going to blow this opportunity?

We have a moment in our history where, because of a good economy, we have this surplus. If we cannot fix these problems now, if we cannot extend some of these benefits now, then when will we be able to do it?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I totally agree. I would much rather be here, as I know the gentleman from Massachusetts would, talking about how we modernize Medicare with the prescription drug coverage than to say that we are here having to talk about restoration of cuts or hospitals closing, literally closing.

I do not think there is yet a total understanding of the depth of the cuts and the suffering and the struggle that is going on today; whole hospitals closing or maternity wards closing or home health agencies.

A wonderful agency that I have worked with in Brighton, Michigan, the first time I visited there, it was two floors with nurses, home health providers on two floors that were serving people in Livingston County. I went back after the BBA was enacted. It is now one floor. The other floor is totally empty.

What does that mean? That means those home health nurses, those individuals that were providing care to people in their homes are no longer available there to do that. It also means job loss. We are talking about supporting small business.

When a hospital closes, when Henry Ford Health Systems has to lay off or early retire 1,000 people, those people are caring for their families. We are not just talking about the care, we are talking about jobs, incomes, the ability of people to care for their own families. So this is serious.

My concern is that we have a very short window of opportunity now to fix this, 3 weeks, 4 weeks possibly, certainly just a matter of weeks. We know there are bills that have been introduced. There are people that are talking about the issue. We need to get beyond the talk. The gentleman from Massachusetts and I have been talking about this for a long time. It is now time to do something about it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Absolutely. Mr. Speaker, one thing I hope that we do in this Congress is, not simply pass sense of Congress resolutions to say that we feel your pain, I hope we pass legislation that has some teeth in it, that actually puts some of the money back into hospitals and health care in this country.

People are suffering all over this country because of these cuts. And we have an obligation in this Congress to fix the problem and to take some of these resources that have been generated by a strong economy, that have produced this surplus, and put it back into health care to make sure that peo-

ple have the very best health care in the world.

I mean, this is the United States. We have the finest health care technology, the best doctors, the best nurses, the best facilities in the world. The problem is that a lot of people cannot take advantage of them because they do not have the resources or the money to do so.

The gentlewoman from Michigan has heard from her constituents. I have heard from my constituents. People come into my office because their loved one has just lost their home health care or because their HMO will not reimburse a particular service that they had done because they are being told because Medicare reimbursements or because of caps on therapy, because of programs that hospitals have that are being cut off.

I mean, it is painful to watch as people come into our office and tell us these sad stories. But what is more frustrating than listening to these stories is the fact of knowing that we have the ability to fix this, and so far we have not done it.

I think we just need to keep the pressure on, and I hope that the people who are watching will keep the pressure on, because we have an opportunity to, right now. This budget deal should not go through unless there are some real fixes in there for hospitals. We are going to do a weekend here to fight the good fight.

I again thank the gentlewoman for this special order and for all of her great efforts.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, let me just say in conclusion as well, I again thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN). I thank my other colleagues. To those that are having the opportunity to listen this evening, I would hope that they would pick up the phone and call their Representative, call their Senator, be involved, e-mail, mailings, whatever means they have of communicating. Now is the time to do that.

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We do have the best health care system in the world. But right now we are in a situation where we are jeopardizing people's health, people's quality of life, and in many cases, unfortunately, their lives. And it is not necessary. This is fixable. We can do something about it. Medicare works. It is a great American success story. We need to make sure we keep it that way.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BALANCES BUDGET WITHOUT DIPPING INTO SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, this evening I will lead a special order on behalf of the leadership of the majority party. Our focus tonight is to talk

about a number of remarkable events that have occurred today, not the least of which was the announcement that the Federal Government has in fact balanced its budget for 1999 and it appears to have done so without dipping into Social Security at all.

This is a long-standing goal of the Republican party and one goal to which we are exceedingly proud to represent.

But before I get into that subject, I want to yield the floor to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS).

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I do plan to participate in part of his discussion. But before we get into that, I just wanted to respond to the comments of the previous speakers on the issue that was being discussed and just give some additional comments.

Today, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) had a press conference at which he announced the development of a bill dealing with the Medicare issue and which the amount of money to be appropriated as well as administrative actions we are requesting be taken from the President will resolve the problem and will deal with all the issues and problems that were mentioned by the preceding two speakers.

I also want to clarify, as Paul Harvey says, to give the whole story; and that is that many of the points that they were belaboring the Republican party for are in fact a direct result of the actions of the President and of his employees, particularly those at the Health Care Financing Administration. They have cut far more deeply than the legislation the Republicans got through asked them to do.

As a result of that, the home health care agencies are severely in trouble, the rural hospitals and skilled nursing units are also in trouble, and even the major city hospitals are in trouble.

The other factor that should be mentioned is that the President, who does have the responsibility for this and who has criticized us for not acting on this, has not come to the Congress with any suggestions of how to deal with it and has not initiated any actions as a result of the problem, although much of it he could do administratively through requests directed to the Health Care Financing Administration.

So there is more to the story than was explained in the last 60 minutes, and I just want to make sure everyone in the House and in the Congress, as well as in our Nation, is aware of the fact. It is a broader story. The President has not acted as we think he should have.

Furthermore, the Health Care Financing Administration has cut more severely than the Congress intended; and Congress has taken action and will conduct a hearing on that, in fact, and final action on the bill in committee this week to ensure that the additional funds will be allocated for hospitals, skilled nursing units, and for home

health care. We hope this will go a long way toward resolving the problem.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I look forward to the return of the gentleman to continue discussing some additional topics.

Again, I want to go back to the news that was revealed here in Washington today. In fact, I brought with me a copy of the New York Times. This is an article that my colleagues would find if they ventured back to page 18-A. It is kind of remarkable, I point that out, because this is a landmark announcement and many in the media are hoping that this kind of news remains buried in the back of newspapers.

In fact, if my colleagues look this up on the New York Times website, they find it even deeper into the paper. But I wanted to bring it on the floor today and magnify the impact of the article to show the impact and how big this really is.

Yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office announced that the Government may have balanced the budget in fiscal year 1999 without spending Social Security money.

Now, that is a remarkable accomplishment. There still remains some additional accounting that needs to come forward as we shore up those numbers. But as of yesterday, it appears that we balanced the budget in 1999 without dipping into the Social Security Trust Fund.

Now, I just cannot overstate at all the magnitude of this announcement and how important this is. When the Republicans took over the United States Congress back in 1994, they pledged to balance the budget by the year 2002; and that seemed at the time to be a reasonable time frame to get to the point of balancing the budget. It was misrepresented by many.

In fact, if my colleagues remember some of the rhetoric coming out of the White House and from some of our friends on the left side of the aisle, they claim that balancing the budget would represent some kind of undue hardship on the American people, that balancing the budget entails drastic and dramatic cuts in Federal programs.

If my colleagues remember, they talked about the notion that we would see seniors out on the streets and we would see children who would be denied meals and things of that sort and opportunity for education. But balancing the budget really did not entail dramatic cuts in spending. It did entail reductions in the overall growth of Federal spending over a certain time frame, and we did that to the extent that we allowed the American economy to catch up with Washington's spending habits by changing the appetite in Congress to spend and spend and spend and to reform the attitude that used to be very prevalent here to one of frugality.

We allowed the American people to catch up with the spending in Washington, and it resulted in a balanced

budget not on target for the year 2002 but a full 4 years ahead of schedule and in fact in 1999 balanced without dipping into the Social Security revenues. Again, a remarkable success.

I will tell my colleagues how remarkable it really is. If we look at what Congress projected back in January of 1995, here is where we saw the Social Security deficit projections at that point in time.

In 1995, we expected that in 1999 we may be seeing a \$90-billion deficit in Social Security projections for this year for 1999. We beat those odds. We, in fact, managed not only to balance the budget but to exercise the kind of regulatory restraint and concern for tax relief that really stimulated economic growth throughout the country that allowed the American people to beat those numbers, to beat those progressions from back there in 1995, to do it in a way that allowed us to balance the budget in 1999, without dipping into Social Security.

Once again, the article that we find in the New York Times and elsewhere around the country this morning is one that I really hope the American people have an opportunity to evaluate and to consider. Because what this article tells us, Mr. Speaker, is that we are far ahead of schedule, we are far further along at this point in time than the American people ever gave us credit for when we took over the Congress.

This is an example of the Congress under promising and over delivering. And I just cannot help but to remind the House one more time that that promise that I described as under promising was made back in 1994 to balance the budget by 2002 at the time seemed like it was insurmountable.

In fact, there is a quote in the article from an individual named Robert Reischauer. He is the Director of the Budget Office or was from 1989 to 1995. Listen to what he says. He says, "If any budget expert told you in 1997 that we would have balanced the budget in 1999, that person would have been committed to an asylum."

Now, that is said with tongue in cheek certainly, but I think it shows the drama of how Washington has just been rocked by this particular announcement and decision.

We have moved forward with a plan to try to stop the President's raid on Social Security. The President proposed when he stood here at the rostrum just at the beginning of the year to deliver a State of the Union address and laid out a plan to once again dip into the Social Security revenues to balance the budget for this year. He moved forward on his plan and his party's plan to move forward to a balanced budget, again dipping into the Social Security program in order to accomplish that.

Well, the Congress has a very different message for the President, and that is we do not need to dip into the Social Security Trust Fund any longer. We should stop the White House raid

on the Social Security Trust Fund and we should move forward on a better plan to allow Congress to balance the budget and live within its means without robbing the security of current retirees and future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) who has returned and joined us again.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I would like to make a few additional points.

First all, we talked in the past year about the tax cuts and the need to give money back to our citizens if we have a surplus. But let me point out to my colleagues how the citizens of our country are getting more money back than we could give them through a tax cut.

Now, how could that possibly be? The point is simple. When I came here in late 1993, early 1994, we were running at an annual deficit of over \$300 billion per year. We were going in the hole that much every year, using every penny I might add of the Social Security surplus. And then in the space of a short time, 5 years, we have changed that. And instead of a \$300-billion deficit way done here, we are now up to over a \$100-billion surplus. This is a \$400-billion difference.

Now, why does this help the people? It helps them in a lot of ways. First of all, we do not have as much interest to pay as we would have otherwise. But more directly, every economist I have talked to says, because we are not out there as a Government borrowing these huge amounts of money, the interest rates will go down and their estimate is the interest rate has dropped between one percent and two percent simply because we have balanced the budget and we have a surplus instead of the deficit.

Now, how does that affect the average citizen? Just think about that for a moment. If the interest rates, just averaging the numbers they have given, is about 1½ percent lower, and recognizing that the average American home is worth \$100,000 and so people have gone on to get a mortgage of roughly that amount for their first home on a \$100,000 mortgage, a 1½ percent difference in interest rates means they are saving \$1,500 per family, just on the mortgage every year, they are saving \$1,500 a year because they have a lower interest rate on their mortgage.

That is astounding. That is bigger than any tax cut we talked about giving them, even though we had proposed a very healthy tax cut in the Republican tax cut proposal. But we actually have given them more money back already just by balancing the budget and having a surplus because it has affected the economy. And this applies to purchases of cars, credit card debt, anything of that sort.

So the average American is saving a lot of money just because we have balanced the budget, and that is very important to remember.

The other point I would make about the comment from the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFER), and he has hit it right on the nose, once again, it amuses me, a couple of months ago we were being wrongly criticized by the folks on other side of the aisle that Republicans were raiding Social Security of all things. How could we do that? That was terrible. And even my Republican colleagues are starting to feel bad about this. Are we really doing that? We must not do that.

So I got up and spoke at the Republican Conference a few weeks ago and said, hey, folks, remember, we may possibly dip into the Social Security reserve just a little bit yet this year and not do it next year, but I do not think we will even have to do that. But remember that the last several years the Democrats have not just dipped into it, they have run off with the whole pot. They have spent every single cent of the Social Security reserve for the past few years.

Now, that is intolerable and it certainly means that they cannot criticize us for any actions we take in that regard this year but, rather, should thank us and congratulate us because we are determined not to touch this Social Security surplus, which is generated because people are paying more into Social Security than is currently being taken out. And that money has to be saved for the future when the current people paying it in will retire and need their money back.

Mr. SCHAFER. Mr. Speaker, this Congress has not balanced the budget without dipping into Social Security since 1960. We have to go back almost 40 years to find a schedule when the Congress acted in a way that honored and respected the full intent of Social Security and did not use the trust fund as some kind of a slush fund.

□ 1945

You have to go back quite a long ways. In the ensuing 40 years that the other party, the Democrat Party has run this Congress, their record and legacy to the American people has been a perpetual use and abuse of the Social Security trust fund by year after year after year dipping into that trust fund in order to pay for the wants and desires of people here in Washington, D.C. It is a great day when we are able to turn the tables, turn things around and go back to the ways the Congress used to run the budget, and, that is, to pay for the things that government wants to spend with the dollars that are on hand today and not borrow and raid the Social Security trust fund.

Mr. EHLERS. Just a brief comment on that, and a slight correction, but the correction is to make a point. There were several years in the late 1970s when Congress did not take anything out of the Social Security surplus. The reason for that is that there was no Social Security surplus. So what did they do? They still overspent but added it to the national debt. If

you wonder why we have an almost \$6 trillion national debt at this point, you can recognize what happened in those years. You just look to it, and see that they just kept the spending on and added it to the national debt. I do not want to imply that you are wrong in any way, but the point is simply they could not take any in those few years because there was not any. It was about 6 years longer.

Mr. SCHAFER. I appreciate the gentleman making that correction.

I yield to the gentleman from Montana.

Mr. HILL of Montana. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding. I just want to reiterate the point that for 40 years when the other party controlled the House of Representatives, not one penny was set aside for the future of Social Security. When there were surpluses, they were spent. Obviously one of the reasons that there were increases in Social Security taxes is because the surpluses were spent and eventually went into deficit which incidentally is what the problem is. One of the problems that we are facing is that sometime around 2014, 2015, there are not going to be Social Security surpluses again. The account will go into deficit. That is, the taxes going in will not be enough to pay the benefits going out. If we do not set aside the surpluses now, those extra dollars that are being paid in, the excess Social Security taxes, if we do not lock them away now for that purpose, then we are going to be faced with the kind of choices which were faced in the early 1980s which are massive tax increases or cut in benefits. In fact, what the trustees of Social Security say is that it is going to be a 25 percent reduction in benefits or a one-third increase in the taxes in order to keep it solvent. That is why maintaining the discipline that got us to this point is so important.

I just want to point out a couple of things that I think kind of have been forgotten, I think many of my colleagues have forgotten, because it is a whole host of policies that were implemented with the new majority. When the new majority, when Republicans took over the House, let me remind you where we were. We had skyrocketing debt. Medicare was on the verge of bankruptcy. Social Security was facing bankruptcy. We were swimming in red ink. We had a record tax increase. If you recall in 1993, President Clinton and Democrats passed the largest tax increase in the history of the country. So when Republicans got elected to Congress, what did we do? We said, "First of all, we have got to reform government." We said, "Let's reform welfare." That helps us two ways. One, it can reduce the burden on the budget, but the other thing is that when people are working and paying taxes, they are adding to the equation rather than taking from the equation. We said, "Let's shift power to the States," give States the authority to run programs more efficiently and use

that money better to get more done. We did that. We said we would balance the budget. How would we do that? We said rather than balancing the budget the way the President proposed, by raising taxes, we were going to do it by constraining spending. And, in fact, we eventually lowered taxes.

And so we saved Medicare from insolvency. People forget that just 3 years ago, we were facing the insolvency of Medicare this year or next year. Now it appears as though Medicare is going to be solvent well into the next century, sometime around 2015, without any changes, and certainly we can make changes to extend that further. It makes me breathless to think of how much we have accomplished in 3 years or 4 years of a Republican Congress. But there is more to do. If we are really going to save Social Security, if we are going to make changes to Medicare that we know that need to be made, we have got to maintain the spending discipline.

If you think about it, and I thought about this, on every single appropriation bill that we passed, the leading Democrat on the Committee on Appropriations has come to the floor and he has made the following statement: "This is a great bill; it just doesn't spend enough money." The problem is that we have spent all the money that there is, all the surplus there is except Social Security. If we are going to spend anything more than what we propose to spend, it is going to start the raid on Social Security again. That is where we have to maintain the discipline. We have to maintain the discipline on the rate of growth of spending if we are going to maintain this balanced budget and if we are going to save Social Security for the long term.

Mr. SCHAFFER. The Democrats on the other side of the aisle like to accuse Republicans, particularly in this Congress have engaged in what they call a do-nothing Congress. I guess if you evaluate progress in Washington based on their standards, we may be guilty of that because their standards involve creating new programs, building new government regulatory structures, manipulating a tax code which usually results in taking more money from the American people and bringing it here to Washington. I am not making this up. They have a 40-year record of coming to this floor and solving every problem in America by creating new programs, new government, new bureaucratic structure, new rules, new regulations, new laws, new taxes, new ways to spend it. That seemed like real progress to them. The result is trillions of dollars in debt and overexpenditures.

So while we have been accused of being a do-nothing Congress, I think the record is quite the opposite and now we are starting to see the fruits of that quiet, behind-the-scenes labor that we have been involved in day after day after day. The results are we got government out of the way in many areas where business is concerned and

job creation and wealth creation and economic growth, we lowered the tax burden on the American people, we allowed the American people through the power and economic strength of a free market capitalistic system that the United States represents to create more wealth in America, to catch up with Washington, D.C., to surpass where we were in 1999 in spending to allow us to begin to pay down the debt quicker, to allow us to focus on tax relief that will enable us ultimately to stimulate economic growth even further, to put more Americans back to work by reforming the welfare system and creating more jobs, to create a stronger and more vibrant education system throughout the country, to establish as a top priority defending our Nation through a strong national defense system.

Americans frankly have to look hard to find these kinds of articles, because the White House and the President's allies in the national media like to put these great big stories on page A-18 as we can see right here in the New York Times. You have to flip a few pages before you find a landmark announcement like this that the "Budget Balances Without Customary Raid on Social Security." Look at the headline right there. How many years have we been working for this very goal and President after President after President stood right up there at that podium, speaker after speaker has come down to these microphones in the well, party after party have all stated this as a primary goal, only one party has managed to accomplish that, it is the Republican Party and we managed to do that within the last 6 years that we have been running the Congress.

This is truly a big announcement. Doing something in Washington sometimes means stopping the bad ideas that emanate from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. As I stated earlier, the Clinton-Gore spending proposals entailed raiding the Social Security trust fund this year to the tune of about \$32 billion. That is equivalent to the yearly Social Security income for one out of every 10 seniors. Let me restate the number again. The Clinton-Gore plan proposed to raid the Social Security trust fund by \$32 billion this year. That is equivalent to a 10 percent cut in every senior's Social Security check. By raiding the Social Security trust fund as the Clinton-Gore plan entailed to the tune of \$32 billion, their plan was equivalent to every senior citizen not receiving a Social Security check for the entire month of July. We accomplish something big by stopping those ridiculous plans that come out of the White House. It allows seniors to have a more comfortable retirement and enjoy their golden years, it allows for economic growth, to put more people back to work, it allows for Americans to afford more education for their children and for themselves when it comes to higher education.

Before I yield again to the gentleman from Michigan, let me just make one

more distinction between what they consider progress on the Democrat side and what we consider progress. Their idea of promoting education opportunity in the United States of America is taking tax dollars from the American people, confiscating those tax dollars, requiring them to be sent here to Washington, D.C. so that politicians can redistribute that wealth to the American people in general or to different political projects and so on, but at times to government schools. That is a fine thing. There is a legitimate cause for the Federal Government to appropriate dollars for education. I do not dispute that at all. But we can do even more. By balancing our budget, by being fiscally responsible here in Washington, D.C., that allows the American people to be full participants in an academic marketplace, picking and choosing the kinds of academic settings that make the most sense for them, picking the kinds of programs that will most directly allow them to enter into the workforce, whether that be through a traditional liberal arts education or one that is involved in technical training of various sorts. That is the point that the gentleman from Michigan has really led this Congress on. I yield to the gentleman on that note.

Mr. EHLERS. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding. Let me just make a couple of final comments on Social Security and then I will say something about education.

I happened to pick up this morning a sheet from the Committee on Appropriations' office because I was interested in digging out these numbers. The chairman of the Committee on Appropriations had managed to get this out last week. In terms of the money taken from the Social Security trust fund to help balance the budget, if you go back to 1960 as you mentioned earlier, the problem starts then but the amounts are fairly small. Nothing in 1960, \$431 million in 1961, then really low again, then up to \$600 million, but very modest amounts, until 1967. What happened in 1967? President Lyndon Johnson, with the unfortunate agreement of the Congress, combined all the money in the Federal budget into what is called the unified budget. Now, that sounds nice but I have to tell you, I was angered back then. I was not involved in politics at all. I never dreamed I would be involved in politics. But I thought that was voodoo economics, to coin a phrase, that they were cheating, because they were taking all the funds, the gas tax trust fund that people pay to get roads built, the aviation trust fund, the Social Security trust fund, Medicare trust fund, combined it all into one. And then look at the figures of what happened after that. Immediately, that year, almost \$4 billion, the highest amount that had ever been taken out of the Social Security trust fund. And it continues to be high, partly to cover the cost of the Vietnam War. Then it dropped down in 1976 to zero. Why? Because there was

no surplus left in the Social Security fund. And then in 1984, 1983 and 1984, we revamped the Social Security tax and really increased it. It is now for many people, the lower income people, the highest tax they pay, for Social Security. So there is a fresh influx of money. And immediately the Federal Government began using that money once again to cover the deficits. It goes up, it starts modestly again, \$212 million, before long it is up to \$58 billion, then continues all the way up to \$60 billion in 1995 and so forth, until we finally got in office and started chopping it down.

Now, the other point I would like to comment on is the one made by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL), about this is not the end-all just because we balanced the budget. We have to make up for all that money that was taken out and basically is added to our national debt. We have to begin paying back the national debt to correct the problems we have had ever since President Johnson went in the other direction in 1967. I am very pleased that last year we got the gas tax trust fund off-budget, so now when people pay their fuel tax, it actually goes into roads, bridges, highways and all the things that it was supposed to go into instead of being used for other purposes. This year, we are trying to get the aviation gas tax off-budget so the ticket tax that people pay when they travel will be used for better airports, runways and so forth. I hope someday personally that we can get the Social Security trust fund off-budget so we cannot even tinker with it and take that money out of there. That is a long-term goal.

Now to shift gears a little bit and make some introductory comments about education. What should we do for education in this country from the Federal level? Here it is quite different from the previous topic we discussed. We have been criticizing the Democrats for a long time on their fiscal management, but I will commend them, just as I commended the Republicans, on their desire to improve education in the United States. I think that desire is shared throughout this entire Chamber.

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But there is a basic difference in philosophy, and I think it is very important to highlight that. The approach of the other party is to have a Washington down program; in other words, it starts here, we think of the ideas, we do the work here, and we filter all that down, and in the process we lose a lot of money.

We can tell endless stories, and you may hear some of those later from my colleagues about the money that is wasted in that.

The Republican philosophy is, first of all, that the Federal Government has a limited role in K-12 education. That is not the job of the Federal Government to dictate how the schools should oper-

ate; it is our job to try to help them in ways that they determine are best, and so that we should serve as a resource for the local and State governments as they attempt to run our schools and that our program should make sense. Furthermore, it is our philosophy that the Federal money should go directly down to the local schools where it will do some good.

Right now, current estimate I am aware of is that only about 65 percent of the education dollars from Washington actually get down to the classroom. Thirty-five percent is lost in administration and other parts of the bureaucracy. Our goal, by virtue of a resolution we passed just yesterday, is to get 95 percent of the Federal money right down in the classrooms where it will do some good.

Also, it is not the Republican philosophy to mandate precisely how that money is to be used. Just compare, for example, President Clinton's proposal to provide 100,000 new teachers. Now that is a noble gesture, but what would be accomplished? Governor Wilson in California tried to do exactly the same thing, and he found out that in fact the result was not what he had expected. Adding teachers to the California system, reducing class size, did not help. If you look at the students' scores, they really did not change. Why not? Because there are not enough qualified teachers available in California or, in fact, in the United States, and so they proceed to hire 100,000, or I forget precise number; they hired a large number of new teachers, most of whom are not qualified, and there was no net improvement in the schools.

Rather than taking a Federal approach that says we will help you hire 100,000 new teachers, a far better approach is to say we want to hear from you at the local level what you could do to improve education in the schools and to work with them, and that has been the emphasis in the Committee on Education and the Workforce of which I am a member. And we have just passed out major legislation today, two different bills which will help the schools, but give them much greater flexibility than they have had in the past and reduce the amount of money spent at the Federal level trying to evaluate programs, telling them what to do and saying: You do it our way or the highway.

So I think it is very important to recognize the distinction in philosophy. The people of this Nation can pick and choose which philosophy they want, but I happen to think just from my years in education; I spent 22 years teaching. As far as my money is concerned that I send to the Federal Government, Mr. Speaker, I would rather have it come back to the local schools and the teachers where they know how to use it and can use it well.

Something else the Federal Government can help in tremendously is that we have to recruit and train and keep good teachers. Over the next decade we

are going to lose 2 million teachers in the schools. There is going to be a great shortage, and that is something the Federal Government can help with through various scholarship programs to make sure that we get the best possible teachers, we train them the best possible way and we make sure we keep them and that they do not go off to other jobs.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield back for a couple of questions perhaps and just some observations.

Your expertise is in science, is in physics, and, you know, the third international math and science study was released, I think about a year ago, showing that there is something to be concerned about in the United States where our graduates are concerned and their competitive rating compared to the rest of the world. Our results were not quite nationally where we would like to see them, but to contrast that we see pockets throughout the United States where school districts and specific schools are doing remarkably well and where our students are, in fact, the best in the world. But trying to allow for a system to occur where children anywhere at the K-12 level, or even at the higher ed level, have access to good professors and good school teachers that get the basics of math and science at the very early ages and are able to cultivate those skills into marketable and competitive skills as they grow is the real challenge for the country.

And you are right. There seems to be an attitude by some in Washington, typically on the Democrat side of the aisle, that suggest that we here in Washington can magically come up with the answers, spend a little money, create a few new rules, and we will resolve that issue. But I think that our answer is right, that the strength really does lie out there in the States. They may need the resources and support of the Federal Government, but they do not need us to take over, and I yield to the gentleman to comment on that point.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I will be pleased to comment on that. You have touched on something that means a lot to me and I pursued a long time.

For those who are not aware, I just mentioned that I happen to be a physicist, I have a doctorate in nuclear physics, and never in my life intended to get into politics, enjoyed teaching and research, but here I am.

I was given an assignment by the previous Speaker of the House to work on improving our Nation's science policy and improving math and science education, and I am continuing this year under the direction of Speaker HASTERT and the Chairman of the Committee on Science, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) both of whom have a deep interest in this and have given a lot of help and support.

And you are quite right. The third international science and mathematics

study which compared students from our high schools with students from high schools across the country really, I think, shamed us in the sense that our students came out near the bottom. They were at the bottom in physics, they were barely above the bottom in mathematics, and overall there were only two nations below us in the rankings of knowledge of math and science in high school.

Mr. SCHAFFER. If I remember right, it was Cyprus and South Africa.

Mr. EHLERS. Yes, in the overall rating, and we were behind Slovenia and a lot of other nations. This was all developed nations of course.

It was a real shock, but there are other factors.

Just recently our science Olympiad students went to compete on an international level, and they were bright students. I met with them, and they were very capable. But once again we did not win the international championship, and it was certainly not the fault of the students. It is just that we have to do a better job throughout our educational system of educating and preparing.

Now there are several reasons for that. Number one, of course, is to produce good scientists and engineers, and that is very important in this technological age because, as my colleagues know and have heard repeatedly here, over one half of our economic growth today comes from science and technology, and if we do not train the people, we are going to lose that to other nations. We already are losing some and have to Japan which spends more on this, on scientific research and training, than we do, a greater percentage of their gross domestic product, and also Germany does the same, and, believe it or not, South Korea is almost overtaking us. So we have to watch this very carefully and do a better job.

But there are other reasons why we have to do a better job in math and science education, and that is I am personally convinced that within 20 years you will not be able to get a decent job in America without some good understanding of science and technology. It even happens in my office here, and you would not think a congressional office would be that way.

But I have told my employees; I said, just imagine, suppose you had worked here 20 years ago, and you fell into a Rip Van Winkle sleep, and you just woke up this morning and came to work here. Would you know what to do? And everyone of them said, no, they would not have the slightest idea because they could not even operate the telephones because telephones are basically computerized today. They obviously could not operate the computer, so they could not get letters out, and they could not handle mail and so forth.

And you just go right down the line, so many things we do. If I asked them to find out what is in a particular bill,

they would not know how to get on the Internet or the Intranet and look it up. We work much more efficiently in the Congress today because of our computerization, but it takes knowledge and skill, and the more that they learn in the school, the less they have to be trained when they get a job.

That relates to another issue of what I call workplace readiness. We are spending a huge amount of money in this country, individual companies are spending that, training their employees to be able to do their work when they hire them, and we certainly have to do a better job of preparing them for the workplace.

Third major reason for improving math and science education is just better educated citizens and voters. We deal with a lot of complex scientific issues here. How are the voters going to be able to judge us and judge the issues if they do not have some background in it?

And similarly in the marketplace, as consumers; how are they going to be able to judge individual products when they evaluate the claims? As my colleagues know, are these claims, too, or are they not, particularly when you get to health supplements, or health care or issues like that. It is very complex, and we certainly need to do a better job of training them.

Now how can we do that? Again, I mentioned earlier trying to find, train and keep better teachers. But there is more to it than that. There are a lot of teachers out there who did not receive adequate training. We should not talk in terms of they cannot do their job, is that not terrible? We should say, hey, they were trained in a different era.

Our job in the government is to try to offer retraining, and that is why I have been a very strong advocate of what is called professional development, helping teachers who are out there, doing a good job but suffering because they have not had the proper training and they do not generally have the best textbook because there are not really good textbooks out there in many of these areas. Let us help them by providing professional development funds so that they can learn more about it.

I am impressed every time that I go in the class. The teachers really want to do the job well, and they really are fearful when they have not had adequate training, and that is what we have to provide.

One last thing the Federal Government could do without interfering with the local schools, but helping them a lot, and that is by funding research on better ways to teach, particularly teaching math and science. There are a lot of new ideas out there, and I have another aspect of that. I am hoping that we can, as a Federal Government, fund a national clearinghouse which will take all the supplementary materials available from chemical companies, from NASA, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion. They all have individual units. Put them all on the Internet, have them all catalogued so if a teacher wants to go and do a unit on Antarctica; there is an interest now because they are trying to save this doctor down there. She can just go right to the Net, she can give her students experiments that are ready on the Internet and say, hey, we read about Antarctica; why is it so cold there? And they can do a unit right that day.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Your comments about science technology and education give me a perfect opportunity to switch the subject and jump to another topic that the gentleman from Montana and I work on quite a lot as western legislators.

But, as my colleagues know, there are a lot of scientists that we count on and rely on and training that we hope to impart in our universities and research universities with respect to forestry. Forestry, the area of forestry, seems that science has kind of gone by the wayside especially with some of the latest decisions that have come out of the White House. The National Forest system is a system that was designed back in 1910 as a system, or was it 1903? Somewhere back there in the early part of the century as a service designed to manage these vast natural resources that the American people own and enjoy and maintain to help stabilize our economy, to utilize these lands for multiple use, and that concept of multiple use is, as I say, going by the wayside. The President made an unfortunate announcement just today that has caught many of us in western States I cannot say by surprise, but it has certainly grabbed our attention because it has tremendous economic consequences, and I will yield to the gentleman from Montana to elaborate further on the President's most recent antics on National Forest management.

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, as my friend from Colorado commented, this is not a good day for rural western America. The western States, as my colleagues know, those of us from the west often have to remind our colleagues from the east how big our western States are and how much of our western States are public lands. My State is 148,000 square miles, and about 30 percent of that is public land, Forest Service land and BLM lands, and the concern that we have and I have today is the President announced today that he is going to be locking up about 40 million acres of US Forest Service land, in essence making it de facto wilderness area. As my colleagues know, the Congress and the Constitution provides that the Congress will determine whether or not lands will be designated as wilderness, and the President by executive order has in effect allocated this 40 million acres to wilderness.

And you made note of the Forest Service. The total Forest Service acres in the country is about 191 million acres, so this is over a fourth or over a

fifth of the total US Forest Service acres, and this designation means there is going to be less access. They are going to close roads, they are going to remove roads, they are going to eliminate timber harvest in these areas, no mining.

□ 2015

In fact, if the previous activities of the administration are any indication, there will be little recreation in these lands, too.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield for a request, and that is, would the gentleman just explain to the House what this wilderness designation means, because for many people, this term wilderness sounds like a great thing. That sounds like a good thing. We like wilderness when it comes right down to it, but the term "wilderness designation" has a very specific legal meaning, which robs the American people of access to their precious lands.

I would ask the gentleman to just go into that a little further and make sure we do not skip over that point, because it is an important distinction that we need to reinforce here on the floor.

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is exactly right. Sometimes I think people confuse the idea of wilderness with wild areas, and those do not have the same meaning at all. Wilderness has a legal meaning, a very specific legal meaning, and it means that the land can only be used in more primitive ways.

For example, if people want to enter the land, they have to do it by horseback or on foot or hike in, they could not even take a bicycle in there. So motorized vehicles are not allowed in there, chain saws are not allowed in there. Basically they are areas that are allowed to remain entirely wild and allow natural forces to be at work.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, so the elderly, the handicapped, the infirm who currently enjoy access to their national forests, under the new designation, the de facto wilderness designation, what happens to them?

Mr. HILL of Montana. Well, those people will not have access to those areas. But even more important than that, the gentleman from Colorado has counties I know in his State and I have some in my State, and in fact, I have one county where 97 percent of the land in the county is Forest Service land. So that community really depends on that land for its livelihood, whether it is timber harvesting or mining, and of course the people recreate on that land. They hunt and they fish, pick berries. All of those things occur on that land. All of that kind of activity will be restricted in these areas under the President's designation.

Now, the President is saying, this is his environmental legacy. The President is trying to establish legacies for his administration. But the record, the environmental legacy with regard to

public land management of this administration is dismal. It has been an absolute failure. It has failed the environment. The General Accounting Office has reported to the Congress, and the gentleman serves on the Committee on Resources with me, that the condition of our western forests is in a disastrous condition, catastrophic condition. When they say catastrophic, they mean that the ecology of these areas is subject to catastrophic risk. Catastrophic fire risk, risks for disease and infestation. This administration's record in managing this resource is dismal.

But also, its impact on these rural communities has been abysmal. These communities rely on these lands for grazing and for timber harvesting and for mining, and all of those sorts of things, recreation, and the President is basically saying, there will be no more of that.

This latest decision on the part of the President really will put the nail in the coffin for many of these rural communities. Much of the economy of this country has prospered over the course of the last decade, but in rural America, things are not so good. In agriculture, we suffered a great deal.

Those communities that are dependent on the public lands and appropriate management of the public lands have suffered greatly. The economy of those communities is in trouble; unemployment rates are extremely high. In my State, many of those counties have unemployment rates of 15 to 20 percent. And what happens when we have that kind of unemployment, the social fabric of the community breaks down, churches cannot afford to stay in business, schools suffer.

As the gentleman knows, these rural communities share in the income that the government produces from the development of these resources. All of that the President is writing off. And it is because, of course there are not many votes out there, there are not a lot of people out there. So the President is more interested in the people that can contribute millions of dollars of soft money to his campaign. He is interested in supporting the people, the glamorous people in Hollywood and the Silicon Valley. But these are the salt of the earth people; these are people with simple needs. The President today has said that these people do not matter, and it is a disaster for rural America.

I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Montana and my colleague from Colorado for taking this time on the House Floor to really address these issues of vital concern. I listened to my friend from Montana talk about the counties. As he explained his own situation, I thought about Gila County, Arizona. Ninety-seven percent of the land in Gila County, Arizona is under some governmental control. The bulk of it is under Federal control.

And, there is a misnomer at work. My colleague from Colorado mentioned the designation of wilderness, but there is a far more misleading moniker given to these federally controlled lands. Mr. Speaker, for our friends in the east and indeed in the Bay Area of San Francisco and other major metropolitan areas, when we hear the term "public land," that suggests in the mind's eye a public library, a public park, a public facility. But in essence, Mr. Speaker, a far more accurate moniker is federally controlled land.

So many of our colleagues from the east fail to understand the distinction. The State of Arizona, the youngest of the 48 contiguous States, not becoming a State until Valentine's Day of 1912 under President William Taft, Arizona, as a condition of its Statehood had to offer, in essence, a dowry to the Federal Government. And that dowry, if you will, was over half the landmass of the State of Arizona given to the Federal Government.

Now, our friends in the east, our friends in the inner city fail to understand what that means. Because the fact is, vast holdings of land as personal property are not found in the State of Arizona or in the American west. But I must tell my colleagues, I get a kick out of those in the think tanks who talk about welfare or socialist cowboys, as if applying for grazing permits is somehow pledging one's trough to the Federal Government. Mr. Speaker, my constituents have no choice. They do not own the land. And yet, time and again they are good stewards of the land that they lease from the Federal Government.

But what we see here is really yet another gulf between rhetoric and reality. My colleague from Montana mentioned the contributions to the Clinton-Gore campaign. Let the record show, and I say this unapologetically and clearly to the American people, Mr. Speaker, vast sums of money came from the Communist Chinese to those coffers, and yet the partisan press wants to ignore that inconvenient fact. Yet, we also see, even as the Clinton-Gore gang extols the virtues of campaign finance reform which, for that crowd, is akin to Bonnie and Clyde at the height of their crime spree holding a press conference calling for tougher penalties on bank robbers, they also wrap up rhetoric about the children.

Mr. Speaker, I would note for this House the vote that took place earlier this summer on the new Education Land Grant Act, what my staff has nicknamed HELGA, the Hayworth Education Land Grant Act, which deals with public land, federally controlled land and sets up a uniform method of conveyance at a minimal cost to rural school districts in 44 of our States, but especially in the American west. And, Mr. Speaker, even though the left insisted on a rule to bring that to the floor and debate, in the final analysis, even the left could not abandon the logic of that common sense approach,

and all 421 Members of the Congress who were here on that day voted in the affirmative for the new Education Land Grant Act.

How sad it is, Mr. Speaker, that the President, who rhetorically embraces the cause of children, has asked a liberal Senator in the other body to put a hold on that legislation. The gulf between rhetoric and reality is profound.

I yield to my friend from Colorado.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. We only have just about 5 minutes left, but I want to say the Education Land Grant bill that the gentleman has introduced is a brilliant bill and earned quite a lot of support here in the House, and I would submit it did so because it typified the original deal, if you will, that existed with all of these Federal lands that we are here discussing, the national forestlands in particular, but also some of the other Federal lands. That is, these lands should be managed for multiple use, keeping in mind that they are to be used for livestock raising, for timber harvests, for mining, for recreation, for wildlife habitat management, for a whole assortment of forest products being used and taken from the forests, all of that within the context of sound forest management. Because if one is not in the forest working the land, taking care of it, keeping the diseased trees treated, getting the bugs out, helping to thin the forests so that they do not catch fire or deplete water resources and so on and so forth, if we fail to do all of those things, not only do we damage the environmental integrity that we are concerned about our national forests, but at the same time, by pushing people off of public lands, we do lose a valuable source of income for schools, for communities. Because these public lands, while they do not pay taxes, there is what is called a payment in lieu of taxes that comes from the economic activity that is generated by those lands.

So when the President pushes this policy forward, and I would ask the gentleman from Montana to elaborate further on this point, further restricting access to public lands means further restricting the economic activity on those lands; it means further restricting the management of those lands, and it threatens not only the forest health, but threatens severely the economic livelihoods of thousands of communities not just across the west, but across the whole country.

But I think disproportionately, that burden falls in our respective districts.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HILL of Montana. The gentleman is exactly right. I have 10 national forests in my district, so when we learned of the President's intention to announce this, it was in the Post last week, we called those regional supervisors and said, how is this going to impact the regional forests? What we found is that the White House had not consulted with the regional forests or

with the individual forest supervisors, with the biologists that are out there in the field. This is a policy that was made up in the West Wing of the White House, not by the land managers out there that understand the resource.

That is why this policy, seven years of this administration, has been so devastating to the natural resources in the west, because they have made these as political decisions. They are decisions that have been made by people that do not understand these communities; they do not understand these resources, and they have made the wrong decisions.

They say they want to preserve the West, but as the gentleman from Arizona pointed out, the reason that the West is such a wonderful, beautiful place is the people that live there have been outstanding stewards of this land for as long as we have been there, and that has included multiple use of the land. We have mined the land, we have timber harvests, grazing on the lands, hiking, recreation on the land, and the resource is an incredible resource.

We know how to take care of the land, work with the land, live with the land. Frankly, we also understand that people are part of the environment too, that the environment is not just about birds and animals, it is about people too, and that a healthy environment for these communities is a prosperous community with opportunity as well.

That is what the President does not understand, that this decision is just the next step in this administration's top-down perspective on managing this natural resource. It is not only bad for these communities and for my district and my State, but it is bad for the environment as well.

I yield to the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Montana.

Just one final point. Again, the gulf between rhetoric and reality. In the 1960s, critics of Lyndon Johnson spoke of a credibility gap. With this administration, sadly, we have a credibility canyon such as the gulf between rhetoric and reality, and as my friend from Montana was making this point, Mr. Speaker, I could not help but think of the slogan of the Clinton-Gore 1992 campaign: Putting People First. How falsely that rings in the years of western Americans.

I yield to my friend from Colorado.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Arizona, the gentleman from Montana and the gentleman who has left us now from Michigan for joining me in this Special Order, and we will come back as often and as frequently as we can to talk about the great accomplishments of the Republican Party.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin). The Chair will re-

mind Members to refrain from characterizing Senate action.

THE BUDGET AND FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, while we are preparing up here to discuss my main topic this evening which will be the Federal public lands, the management tools, the history of multiple use in this country, Colorado water, Colorado recreation, and Colorado jobs, while we are preparing to set up for that, I want to mention a couple of comments on a subject that involves every state in the Union, and that is our budget.

□ 2030

Back here, we are right in the midst of some very tentative negotiations, very fragile negotiations would be an appropriate way to discuss it. The Federal budget is important to every citizen in America. This Federal budget helps determine the future of our generation and the kind of debt and the kind of opportunities we give to the next generation and the next generation and the next generation.

We have some very strong policy points that must be adopted or must be carried out, and those policy points are the Republicans' top priorities in regards to these budget negotiations. Number one, the defense of this country, this country must maintain a strong defense. We cannot be the second strongest kid on the block.

Number two, education. We can have a strong military. We can have a good economy but if we do not have a strong educational system, and when I talk about a strong educational system history will show that the best educational system is not run from Washington, D.C. down, as the Democrats would have it done but it is run from the local school districts up, education is absolutely crucial.

The third thing, for 40 years, while the other party was in control, they ran deficits year after year after year. It is very interesting to see them all of a sudden adopt fiduciary and fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers of this country. The plan and the budget we have to come up with, we will come up with, has to reduce that Federal debt.

In fact, I remember all the criticism given by the other side, the Democrats, when we took the majority: Do not fill us full of baloney that they are going to get rid of the annual deficit; do not tell us how the cuts in the programs and cutting government waste, which is one of our big targets, is going to help get rid of the annual deficits.

Well, today it is as if they were part of our team back then. They did not cooperate much. Some of them did but not all of them. Today they have forgotten all about that. We do not have